

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.ukdisclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.ukDate: 11th June 2021

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2021 / 375

Reply contact name is: Kerry Merritt

Dear ***,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 23rd April 2021 concerning Used and Unmarked Force Vehicles.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

Your request for information has now been considered and it is not possible to meet your requirements in full.

You wrote:

Please can you provide a list of vehicles currently used by the force, including a separate list on unmarked police vehicles?

Where possible, please provide the list in the format of manufacturer, generic model name and number of examples in the force.

For Example:

Manufacturer: Vauxhall

General Model: Astra

Number Of Unmarked Vehicles: 200

Our response:

Please refer to the Disclosure Spreadsheet.

The information you are requesting regarding the details of unmarked vehicles used for, or available for, covert purposes are exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement

Section 31 is a qualified and prejudice based exemption and therefore requires Wiltshire Police to establish the harm in disclosure and the public interest for and against disclosure.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Harm

Wiltshire Police are charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The disclosure of some unmarked vehicles used for, or available for covert purposes would provide offenders with valuable intelligence, facilitating their ability to commit crime and evade detection and if non-operational and non-uniformed officers and staff were identifiable in these circumstances they could be put in serious danger.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure

Disclosure of the information requested would promote transparency and the accountability of Wiltshire Police, provide an indication of how public funds were being used and furthermore, disclosure of the type of fleet vehicles, would enable the public to know what resources were available in Wiltshire and allow them to make informed choices about their safety.

Factors against disclosure

Disclosure of this information would undoubtedly result in members of the public experiencing an increase in crime as a result of offenders being in possession of this intelligence. The safety of the public is of paramount importance to Wiltshire Police and we would not look to disclose information which would place the public at risk of harm or further crime within the community. If offenders knew the make, model and how many of covert vehicles Wiltshire Police have, it would enable them to make more informed decisions and more skilfully plan particular offences. In addition to this, any future covert operations which may have took months of planning would be damaged and officers and staff would be at a greater risk of harm if the details of unmarked vehicles were in the public domain.

Balance Test

The public interest in disclosure of the details of unmarked Police vehicles used for covert purposes is relatively small. The strongest factors against disclosure are the increase in crime that would be committed, which would result in the public losing trust within the Police service and feeling unsafe within their communities. Furthermore, there would be great harm to covert operations and non-uniformed officers and staff using covert vehicles. Wiltshire Police deems the harm that would be caused from disclosure of this information to be disproportionate to any public interest held in this information and therefore, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of non-disclosure of this information.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for those aspects of your request.

Exemption applied: **Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement**

I apologise for the delay in answering your request.

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry Merritt
Disclosure Decision Maker

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.



Force Disclosure Unit

Wiltshire Police HQ, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2DN
Telephone 101 ext 62005

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from Wiltshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing to the:
Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police Headquarters,
London Road, Devizes,
Wiltshire,
SN10 2DN

Email at disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk.

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Force Disclosure Unit within 20 working days of the Force's response to the original FoI request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing to include confirmation of the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker, who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Force Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The Independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the Independent Decision Maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk